



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

September 6, 2007

Reply To
Attn Of: ETPA-088

Ref: 06-035-AFS

Jeff Walter, Forest Supervisor
Ochoco National Forest
3160 NE Third Street
Prineville, OR 97754

Dear Mr. Walter:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD) for the **Spears Vegetation Management Project** (CEQ No. 20070333), on the Ochoco National Forest in Oregon. We are submitting comments in accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The selected alternative in the ROD is Alternative 4. This alternative would treat approximately 16,740 acres within the 39,200 acre project area. Activities under this alternative would include approximately 4,935 acres of commercial harvest, 10,935 acres of precommercial thinning, and 196 acres of thinning in hardwood stands. Fuel reduction activities would include approximately 15,162 acres of prescribed fire, and 2,490 acres of grapple piling, and 793 acres of hand piling. Approximately 12.3 mmbf would be harvested, and a total of 15.4 miles of road would be constructed or reconstructed. Decommissioning would occur on 5.9 miles of road.

In our comments on the draft EIS in June 2007, EPA raised concerns about impacts to water quality and uncertainty around the level and sufficiency of monitoring provided for in the document, as well as questions around how and to what extent road impacts would be addressed after closure. We appreciate the additional detail included in the FEIS to address these questions, as well as the addition of a water quality monitoring station on Peterson Creek. We also appreciate the additional detail on road construction activities in Appendix A, and commend the Forest Service for selecting the alternative that was developed to emphasize the use of existing roads and minimize new road construction.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the EIS. Please feel free to contact Teresa Kubo at (503) 326-2859 with questions about our comments.

Sincerely,

/s/

Christine B. Reichgott, Manager
NEPA Review Unit